
Book Review

Team-Based Learning for Health Professions Education: A Guide to Using Small Groups for Improving Learning.

Edited by Larry K. Michaelsen, Dean X. Parmelee, Kathryn K. McMahon, Ruth E. Levine. Foreword by Diane M. Billings. Sterling (VA): Stylus Publishing, LLC; 2007. ISBN 1579222471, 9781579222475. Hardback 256 pages; \$69.95 US, paperback, \$24.95 US. Website: <http://www.styluspub.com>

Team-based learning (TBL) is the application of small-group, active-learning methods in an environment in which students are held responsible for both individual and group learning. In order for TBL to be successful, the teacher must properly plan the event and provide timely and active feedback to the students in order for learning to occur.

The idea of TBL was formulated originally by Larry Michaelsen in the 1970s while he was a faculty member at the University of Oklahoma.¹ Team learning was also described in 1990 by Senge for the corporate environment and small group team learning has been used as an educational tool for several decades.² Thus, as a concept in education and business, it is nothing new. However for the world of chiropractic education, we are just now beginning to discover how exciting and productive this type of learning environment can be.

In the latest book by Michaelsen et al,³ the authors offer detailed instructions for how a health profession educational institution may implement this method of learning. They provide an argument that as health professionals we must work in teams for the best interest of our patients. Therefore, TBL helps to prepare our students to be effective health care providers in the healing environment.

The challenge for most of us as chiropractic educators is to move from the more traditional and passive methods of teaching to more active methods that stimulate higher-order learning. TBL is one of the many active methods that we may choose to implement. This text provides us with the fundamentals necessary to successfully implement TBL in the classroom and other learning environments, such as the clinical training setting.

The first several chapters of this book are written by the developers of this educational method and offer the basic principles of TBL. The text is clearly written, offering no-nonsense, detailed descriptions of what is required to successfully apply TBL. Other chapters provide the details needed to create effective team assignments, how to improve critical thinking skills, how to create teams, and team maintenance.

As educators we are often so excited about a new method of instruction that we sometimes overlook the skills that we need to develop in order to be successful

in implementing the new learning strategy. This book has not forgotten to provide us with these key pieces of information. This text offers the skills that we need to develop, how we may properly prepare for the team learning environment, and how we may evaluate if our application of TBL is working or not.

This text offers us a road map and the theory behind TBL. However, it also provides practical descriptions authored by those who have successfully applied TBL. The latter part of this text provides us with real life applications from various health profession training environments (e.g., basic sciences, nursing, psychology, physical medicine and rehabilitation).

What I find exceptional about this book is that it is focused on TBL for the health professional, as opposed to general education as we often find in other education texts. The authors provide a healthcare focused approach so that those of us who teach nurses, physical therapists, medical doctors and/or chiropractors may easily apply the principles from this text to the learning environment. I highly recommend this text for any healthcare educator who wishes to provide their students with the team learning competencies that are necessary to succeed in the present and future healthcare environment.

REFERENCES

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